

Segway takes tourism industry by storm

Introduced into the South African market by Imperial Green Mobility 12 years ago, the Segway - a two-wheeled, self-balancing, battery-powered electric vehicle - has taken the tourism industry by storm, and it's not surprising either.



"Initially Segway Tours were globally seen as a unique experiences, but today these tours are offered across continents," says Jonathan Cohen, managing director of Imperial Green Mobility. "There is no better way to see a city, a resort, an attraction - any place of beauty for that matter - than on a Segway."

The Segway was brought into South African by Cohen with tours first offered at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town and Sun City Resort. "Everyone said I was crazy and that Segway Tours would never catch on in our country; yet today there are over 12 Segway Tours in operation and each tour is highly profitable," says Cohen.

"In addition to the V&A Waterfront and Sun City, tours also now operate at Moses Mabhida Stadium along the Durban Golden Mile, Spier Wine Farm in Stellenbosch, The Royal Livingstone in Zambezi, Tsitsikamma (including Wilderness and Storms River), Ivory Tree Game Lodge in Pilanesberg, Wildcoast Sun in the Eastern Cape, Grabouw in the Western Cape and Drakensburg in the picturesque Champagne Valley."

Opportunities available

With a focus on helping grow small businesses, Imperial Green Mobility have, in the last year, sold a number of their Segway Tours. "Entrepreneurs usually battle to find funding to start off their own business, which is why we offer the rental option of Segways to them before purchasing the units outright. While there is an initial investment in terms of buying the units, businesses can pay their Segways off in under two years and start making a profit whereas the average business takes at least four years before it gets off the ground," says Cohen.

In addition, Imperial Green Mobility assists small and medium enterprises with the set-up and running of Tours, as well as training of staff members.

Imperial Green Mobility have plans to launch four more Segway Tours in the near future - a heritage tour of Soweto aptly called The Long Glide To Freedom that will take visitors past iconic sites including Nelson Mandela's home, a Cape Town tour of the beachfront, V&A Waterfront, Green Point and stadium, a scenic tour of Hermanus, an area famous for southern

right whale watching, and a Sandton tour.

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